

A PSYCHOLOGIC STUDY OF STEALING IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

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In the present paper no attempt will be made to consider the so-called benign types of ordinary stealing, as these are more or less conscious and purposeful acts common to many individuals of all ages. Nor will special emphasis be placed on fanciful stealing such as the kleptomaniacs, where the objects stolen are often of highly symbolic significance such as studied originally by Krafft-Ebing,¹ and more recently by Stekel,² Albrecht,³ Riklin⁴ and Pfister⁵ as manifestations of neuroses, and by Gross⁶ as a compulsive act in a manic-depressive, or by Chlumsky⁷ and Sommer⁸ in feeble-minded persons whose defects were either inherited or acquired. The few cases which will be reviewed here are confined to persons who have stolen money or other valuables without the ordinary patent motives of simple covetousness or revenge, and who often find themselves overcome by the temptation in face of the apparent knowledge that the act is wrong. Purely as an impulse the act is not so very dissimilar to that of fanciful kleptomania, nor is it often essentially different from the purposeful stealing of everyday occurrence as found in poorly inhibited individuals. On the whole, one may say that the main characteristic of the persons here considered is stealing money and consciously committing other antisocial acts of a petty sort mainly as a consequence of having no well grounded sense of property rights. Usually these individuals show predominantly many other poor adaptations to authority and law from earliest life and they appear unable to thoroughly grasp the importance of making the proper submission and compromise with parental discipline. I think it must be freely admitted by every one that the whole problem of the cause of stealing as an antisocial trait in juvenile delinquency is still in a chaotic state. There are

1. Krafft-Ebing: *Psychopathia Sexualis*, ed. 13, 1907.
2. Stekel: *Nervöse Angstzustände und deren Behandlung*, 1908 and 1912.
3. Albrecht: *Zur Psychologie der Kleptomanie*, *Zentralbl. f. Psychoanalyse*, etc., May, 1913.
4. Riklin: *Zentralbl. f. Psychoanalyse*, 1911.
5. Pfister: *Die Psychoanalytische Methode*, 1913.
6. Gross: *Das Freud'sche Ideogenitätsmoment und seine Bedeutung im manisch-depressiven Irresein* Kraepelin's, Leipzig, 1907.
7. Chlumsky: *Vierteljahrsschrift f. gerichtliche Medizin*, 4: 1892.
8. Sommer: *Diagnostik der Geisteskrankheiten*, Vienna, 1901.

some investigators who look for the root of these trends entirely in the make-up of the youth himself; they count him either a moron, a subinhibited mental defective, or a constitutional psychopathic inferior — whatever that term may just mean. Others greatly favor the idea that the parents and home environment are largely responsible for the development, if not for the actual implantation of the unruly or unmoral traits of character. Usually neither group neglects to thoroughly indict the family stock for the delinquencies found. They find in the family history certain vague though pertinent psychic or neuro-pathic traits, and, failing to discover a proper cause for the delinquency per se in the life history of the youth or his immediate environment, they apparently employ the heredity factor as a last resort. No sooner, however, does one undertake to investigate a series of such youths than he is impressed when all the above views are requisitioned to interpret juvenile delinquency, there are many more subtle forces at work than those usually obvious on the surface. Some of these obscure causes may be illustrated.

Apropos to our present study are Healy's⁹ investigations of mental conflicts and repressions in delinquent children. He analyzes the acts of stealing money to sex delinquency and the incomplete mastery of the latter. For instance, one of his cases, that of a boy, was taken from his home environment and evil companions and was cured of his delinquency. Apparently, Healy's case was a conversion or substitutive mechanism of lying and stealing, the result of unsuccessful attempts to repress the sexual trends. In a long series Healy found surprisingly often concealed sexual conflict as well as defects in parental discipline and lack of proper filial-parental relations. He also cites several cases in which mental conflict grew out of the child's discovery from outside sources that a previously supposed parent was not really such. However, he does not specially mention cases in which antagonism to the father and desire for childish revenge on this parent was a cause for stealing as shown in my cases.

ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

CASE 1.—A boy of 15 was recently seen by me at the request of one of the visiting teachers of the Board of Education. He played truant from school and stole, and had done so for several years—in fact, ever since his father deserted the family. The mother herself had become embittered because of her marital troubles and went to live with her mother. Soon after the boy, when 11 years, stole so much from his grandmother and her immediate family that he and his mother had to go elsewhere. The boy's great fault was in concealing his thoughts and various daily activities from the grown people, and he was always uncomfortable in the latter's presence. In fact, he was

9. Healy: *Mental Conflicts and Misconduct*. Little, Brown & Co., 1917.

most secretive in any inquiry about his whole life. After the more obvious faults in the home and school were set right and the boy permitted certain liberties and pleasures, his conduct improved; yet he did not obtain a good vigorous activity or proper adaptation to parental authority. He still lied and was sly. When made to join the church choir he stole from the church, and when forced to attend a special school he stole from that.

A frank talk with this boy showed that he failed to make any good compromise with discipline and authority. Unfortunately, with only a partial reconstruction of habits in progress, the boy was lost to view. It was learned later, however, that he had never adjusted himself to the father's authority; when the father deserted the family the boy failed to adjust himself to his mother, who beat the boy even more unmercifully than his father. Finally the grandmother treated him even more strictly, and he stole and otherwise showed dilapidated conduct in her home until he and his mother were obliged to leave. The boy apparently was not consciously clever enough to know that his stealing brought about the separation.

CASE 2.—A boy of 10 who was the recipient of whippings administered by his father had sharp conflicts, and first began to steal from the father after punishments at 8 years. Gradually he grew sullen and revengeful. He then began to steal from the proprietor of the delicatessen store where he worked. The proprietor undertook severe discipline also. At 10 he stole from a teacher who was strict with him and whom he specially disliked. In this instance the conflict with authority was all quite conscious and easily reprieved by adjusting the home and school life.

CASE 3.—The next instance is one of incorrigibility and stealing in a girl, aged 13, much like a series of cases reported by Dr. Healy. She began her disobedience and stealing at 11, soon after a playmate tried to induce her to go to the parks with boys and get money from such associations. She refused, yet wished very much to have the money to spend which her evil playmate displayed. She underwent mental torment in this moral conflict, but finally repressed it and became delinquent and stole only when she failed to be promoted in her class. She then took small sums of money whenever she came across them. The child says, "Father, mother and teacher say 'Don't,' 'You mustn't,' and then something inside tells me to be bad and steal. If I wanted to I could be the brightest girl in school. I took things probably once a week—about as often as the other girls went to the parks with boys, but I never went with the boys."

A case in which the causes for the delinquency were more complicated and seemed in part due to inability to properly adjust to the revolt at puberty may be cited in outline.

CASE 4.—An only child, now 19 years old, unexpectedly underwent an entire change of personality at puberty. Previously he had been sweet-tempered, obedient and affectionate. At 14, he "flared up" and declared he would no longer attend Sunday school. Immediately after this "astonishing rebellion" he insisted more or less on having his own way, and became smart and cocky. He not only revolted against parental authority but behaved in the same way toward the head master at private school. Induced to join the church he began to lie, refused to study, and at 17 was incorrigible and sly. He was expelled from school for theft. When taken to task for his misconduct he was indifferent, "as though he possessed no moral sense." When asked the

reason why he stole he said the other boys had lots of money to go out with the girls but he hadn't, and one could not properly entertain them without money. He then insisted on leaving preparatory school and going West, even forfeiting prospects of an inheritance by so doing. He was finally allowed to go West, and was apparently doing fairly well at an inferior occupation when he was again placed under the guidance of church influences, and he again became dissipated and negligent of his personal and social obligations. He lost his job and drifted about from one position to another, losing them largely because of carelessness and indifference to his work. The minister and other persons connected with the church who had been looking after his welfare, while away from home, washed their hands of all responsibility and soon after this he "braced up" and secured a job of his own finding. He now writes his parents that he has learned his lesson, is willing to come home and settle down to work and abide by the regulations of home and school, adding that he is *willing to do just exactly as father directs*.

Comment.—Here we find the first inability to adapt to the parental authority at being forced to go to church and when he was forced further to join the church his moral dilapidation was quite complete; and though he did fairly well "out West," he broke down again when the guidance of the church was reintroduced. Probably the moral inhibition superadded to the parental direction was the main cause for breaking down his good social conduct. Apparently this case is a common one of revolt at puberty. The very closeness of filial-paternal attachment in early childhood made the revolt at puberty the more violent. When the revolt was coupled with sexual repression and difficult adaptation to this social and antisocial demand, he extended his dilapidation of conduct to lying and stealing as well as incorrigibility and truancy. The final outcome is not yet, although the boy seems to be on the road to making a proper adjustment, a compromise with the home authority, and has expressed his willingness to abide by the rules of society. It may be added that this young man has very recently entered a noncombatant part of the governmental activities, but shows still an incomplete social adjustment but has so far as known stolen nothing for the past two years.

One of my cases, a woman about 24 years of age, seems to be analogous to the case reported by Dr. Glueck of a latent homosexual complex.¹⁰ Again, as in the previous instances, the final analysis cannot yet be supplied. The case, however, is worthy of more extended study, which will be attempted.

CASE 5.—The girl was a fairly clever paid worker in a social settlement. Her appearance was pleasing, her work in general good, and everybody liked her. She stole only from women, and those, too, were her best friends. So gracious was she in her conduct in spite of her peculations that not only did she continue to be very fond of her victims but they reciprocated her affections. In consequence, inquiry had to be undertaken with greatest delicacy lest all parties concerned might have their "feelings" hurt. It was only after a perfectly impossible series of thefts that "all hands" agreed to a partial psychology investigation. The girl's old family nurse reported that she showed no special peculiarities in childhood, learned easily and stood high in her studies.

10. Glueck: "Studies in Forensic Psychiatry," Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1916, p. 239.

Her education was interrupted at the end of her first year at college by dismissal on account of theft. She had a short, benign attack of chorea at puberty.

As a young girl she had normal powers of observation and concentration. She was quick and impulsive and was said to have been too ambitious to attain physical and mental vigor for her physical endurance. She was practical, active and serious-minded, bashful in the presence of men, but friendly and affectionate with women. She was sympathetic, kindhearted and generous with girls. She resembled her father in physique and her mother in temperament; for the latter she has always shown decided preference. In general, she had a keen moral sense. She always showed emotion when detected in taking money, putting her arms about her victim and crying in apparent genuine concern. She spoke frankly about her thefts from her "dearest friends" both at college and in business associations. She claimed to have stolen first without cause, but soon claimed it was really to help her invalid sister, but later thefts lacked this motive. In fact, she now has an income from inherited property as well as drawing a salary, and is at a loss to account for her thefts. She volunteers the statement, "I never have cared anything about men, but am deeply interested in girls. One college friend from whom I took small sums was like my business associate, of whom I am now very fond." When pressed rather closely she says, "Yes, I suppose these girl friends do have great influence over me. I feel nearer to them than to my mother." This last was said with the emotional stress of one speaking of affections stronger than ordinary friendship.*

I think one may safely infer when the act of stealing occurs without apparent motive, at least sufficient for the offense as ordinarily found, that it is probably unconsciously conditioned either on a defect in adaptation to authority, to sexual conflict and repression at puberty,

* It is interesting to see what becomes of these patients under a system of wise care and attention by lay individuals. The following letter recently received explains in part, and is written by a woman conducting a girl's school in Massachusetts:

"On visiting New York just at the time of the difficulty this girl had experienced, she told me it was her intention to 'drop out of sight,' this after her detailed account of her trouble. She decided to return with me, and for three months my anxiety for her was great. I kept her with me continually, never alluding to her life in New York and keeping her confidence strictly. Feeling that she must have some interest in something radically new, I arranged with a teacher at one of the physical culture schools to have her take a course of study. She took the two years' course, and I arranged that she apply the knowledge she had obtained in our own school. All the time for more than two years I kept in constant touch with her, never permitting her to be far from me and giving her all the love and care I would my own daughter. Away from her father, she has developed honor, established a habit of truthfulness, and is now a trusted helper."

Undoubtedly the sublimation, possibly a homosexual transference, seems to be working satisfactorily. However, a more genetic rationalization of the real unconscious motive should be given. Finally, one may say in this case that under ordinary conditions perhaps this girl will not break down into her old delinquencies.

or it is a vicious homosexual theft-substitution for the offender's own sex, as in this last instance.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO TREATMENT

The line of therapeutic procedure is obvious in all the foregoing, that is, explanation by analysis, conscious guidance, and a sympathetic after-care and training. The enormous demand and difficulty of sublimation in the homosexual victim of the theft habit, makes correction extremely difficult. In fact, it is to be doubted whether the homosexual is ever able to sublimate sufficiently to keep him from social conflicts, or from a neurosis more or less dominant throughout his life. His task of adaptation must be so enormous that his life is destined never to be a contented or happy one.

I cannot too forcibly insist on the importance of studying the child's *adaptation to parental authority* when delinquency and stealing begin at a very tender age, as a basis for adjustment to all law and order in the future life of the individual. An example which exquisitely illustrates my thesis is the following, given at length.

DETAILED REPORT OF A TYPICAL CASE

CASE 5.—*History*.—The case is a rather common one in its clinical expression, and is that of a young man in middle adolescence. He had a fairly normal physical and mental development up to 5 years of age, when he more or less abruptly began to lie and practice deceit. Soon he began to take all sorts of things which did not belong to him—knives, scissors, thimbles, and various objects he found lying about the house. He had been neither a sensitive nor a passionate-tempered child in infancy, and as he grew up he was quite obedient to the home discipline under ordinary circumstances. The father tried to correct his lying and stealing by talking to him, but, in the father's words, "he did not seem to grasp the full import of these talks nor did he seem to realize that he could not have anything he wanted whether it was his or not." After the father's talks and mild physical punishment the boy was "terribly sorry," and would show no further misconduct for weeks at a time, when he would relapse to his former misbehavior. The parents hoped he would "grow out of it," and thought his unusually rapid growth had something to do with his moral delinquencies.

At 9 years he was nearly 5 feet 4 inches in height. From 5 to 9 years of age he had been a fair student at school, but his studiousness had gradually decreased until his main interest in school life was in athletics with the boy group. He became hyperactive and wanted to be constantly on the move. He had little patience with his teachers and practiced all the quieter forms of deceit and chicanery of the poor student. His growth continued to be rapid, and at puberty he was nearly 6 feet in height. His lying and thieving propensities grew *pari passu* with his years, and as he grew older he coveted things of more importance. When his delinquencies were found out he appeared as remorseful as ever. His moral defects clouded the activities of his daily life but little until puberty; he then began to revolt at the school discipline although outwardly he appeared to be a fairly well behaved boy.

He was changed from the grammar school, where he had grown quite unruly under a woman teacher, to a private school with a capable male instructor, but made little change in deportment. He stood well with his boy companions in spite of the fact that he helped himself to their wearing apparel and other personal belongings; no special deceit was resorted to in these misappropriations. When taken to task by the head master for a larger theft he played truant and tried to lie out of it. Once he fooled both his parents and the head master for a week's nonattendance at school. He steadily lost ground in his classes and was put back, but these inabilities to progress seemed only to lessen his ardor for a school career. Otherwise his hopes and ambitions in life were much like those of other boys of his age and station.

At 14, when rather severely taken to task he ran away from home, leaving a "touching appeal" to explain his disappearance. He was soon located in a neighboring city and brought back home, apparently quite willingly. Soon after this episode he had an attack of chickenpox which caused him to lose six weeks at school. While convalescing he had two fainting attacks (probably due to anemia); the restrictions entailed in caring for his full restoration to health caused him to fail in his examinations, although he was warned that this might occur. A few days after this failure in promotion he eloped from school, borrowed a horse, and, dressed in a sort of cowboy wild west outfit, wandered away in the country. He took no special pains to conceal his itinerary or his whereabouts. When trailed and found three days later, he was living in the wilds, had a tent and was paying, begging or stealing for his necessary articles of food. He had borrowed the horse for a day, and when it was not returned search led to the boy's apprehension. He seemed not to recognize the gravity of his failure to return the horse, and acted rather callous and unfeeling about the whole matter. Only when pressed rather sharply as to the details of this escapade did he lie, a rather common reaction when he was cornered.

Comment.—The foregoing brief summary was duly verified from several sources at the first examination. The boy was found to be a great hulking fellow, much in advance of his years. Although physically and mentally restive under examination, he was apparently frank but rather affectless in going over the history of his delinquencies. His eyes, usually shifty, would light up with boyish enthusiasm as he unfolded a rather plausible scheme for his future life and ambitions, which was to go to Texas and take up ranch life under the direction of an old friend of the family.

Examination.—The physical examination was completely negative. Mental tests showed this youth to be clever and resourceful; he had a logical memory with no mental defect; he was about three years in arrears in his school studies but in advance of his age in performance tests. His lack of interest in school made his attention and power of sustained concentration on his studies poor. He had a very clever ability to use tools, was quite an expert garage man, and drove the family automobile. He was self-reliant. He easily learned to swim, dance, and shoot. He was easy to get acquainted with and had the faculty of making many friends, but was not over-particular in his choice of companions. Persons engaged in outdoor activities he chose to cultivate particularly. He was always rather egotistical and wanted the spotlight on all his athletic acquirements. Even as a young child he wanted his own way, and used to tease a good deal to get it. As a boy under 5 years of age, after listening to especially exciting narratives of adventure he would be restless in sleep, had nightmare, dreamed of Indians and of being chased

by snakes, etc., but for several years he has had no remembered dreams and sleeps "like a log."

On being asked how he handled the home discipline, the boy remarked, "When things didn't go well, and they sort of knocked me down and out, I frequently thought of running away and earning my own living. I took but one flight, and I enjoyed it." When he is plotting to do something, or has done something he ought not to, he talks very fast and volubly, sparring for time to find a way out. He chiefly craved the sympathy of his mother, his sister, and the old family cook; the latter, especially, gave him money for his various escapades as a child when the father objected.

Conduct While at School.—A digest of the opinions of the head master of a preparatory school regarding this boy a few days after my preliminary examination of him is as follows: "I am very sorry to say that the boy failed in his entrance examinations pretty hopelessly in both algebra and English. We did not expect much, of course, on the technical written papers: his entrance examinations consisted, therefore, principally of an effort to determine whether he was ready to buckle down to good, severe work. I am sorry he did not pass this test either. He manifested considerable interest in stock, which is a subject for our seniors only, and said frankly that he would like to ride a horse, but didn't care much about wielding a hoe, and that he hated chickens. I told him the question was whether he wanted to take off his coat, and get down with the boys of the first class, who were younger than he, and really get a thorough foundation and go right through the whole four years of our agricultural course. He seemed to feel a little hurt, that I thought he was unwilling to hustle; but the impression he made on all of us was rather that of a somewhat elegant dilettante. He hired an automobile to bring him over the short distance from the station, and in general seemed somewhat of a kid-glove farmer. However, we felt that he was something of a good sport in that if he got roused he might put the work through rather than quit. At the same time, he showed no real or vital interest to do anything except the small part of our course that happened to be of interest to him. As there were enough boys to fill up our enrollment who did very much better on our technical examinations and showed a more willing spirit, we felt, naturally, we ought to take them and reject this boy."

Subsequent History.—A short while after this poor showing, the boy was placed in the training camp to be under close observation. He made good contact with the other boys but frequently took their ties and canes without asking permission. He neglected his studies and crafts work to talk and walk with girls at a neighboring hotel, but while with them his deportment was quite correct although somewhat "rattlebrained" and "kidlike."

After the first two weeks of minor delinquencies at the club camp, he took on two occasions a fair sum of money from the clothes of some of the summer guests near the camp. It is interesting to note the final confession the boy made of his temptation and final downfall in the theft. "For days I had been thinking about money, especially at night when I would go to bed. I thought of all the good things I could get. It was all selfish on my part. I wanted to purchase candy, pipes and cigarets, and neckties for myself. For several nights I thought this all over. I thought that the bath-houses would be pretty easy and then I thought how wrong this was, and for a couple of nights I put it out of my head and then it began again, for no particular reason that I know of, because I did have some money with me. I went to

the bath-house one day and saw the door open and took the money I found in some clothes there. Then I saw that I got away with this, and went in again on another day and took more money. At first, I would see the door open and then walk away because I would think how wrong it all was, and then something would come over me, like a wave, and I would put the thoughts away about it being wrong and would then go in and take the money. I never thought of the legal consequences and don't think I ever imagined I would get caught. I had no antagonism against the men I took the money from—in fact, I didn't know one of them at all. I thought if accused I would bluff it out, and I tried that but it failed; then I felt sorry and ashamed. I don't think the idea of spending money on the girls had anything to do with it—it was all for myself." While the boy gave this information frankly, and with downcast eyes, he did not seem to appreciate the seriousness of his offense at all.

After the foregoing episode the whole series of delinquencies were gone over in minute detail, especial inquiry being made on the first remembered act at 5 years of age. It was difficult to get the patient to submit to a painstaking scrutiny of his early life at first. Finally, the acts of stealing led to the early conflicts with the father about punishments for disobedience and lying. At the outset of his initial acts of disobedience he argued with the father regarding the injustice of the punishments, but later when silenced by the father he grew sullen and had a "hang dog" expression. Still later, after other acts when requested to explain he refused to make any defense, excuse or apology. As he said, "I thought I had best take the punishment coming to me and get the matter over as soon as possible, which I did." Further association on his acts and the rights of property in particular brought out the statement, "Why, you see when I was just a little kid I got the idea that all the property in the house as well as everywhere else belonged to father. If he didn't actually own it, it was subject to his control or disposal." It was shown further that even the more intimate belongings of the mother, such as scissors, rings, thimbles, etc., were really the father's and that when he took things he felt that his father would have to pay for or replace them. When he received punishment he never went to the mother for consolation but to the old colored cook who had been in the family employ for so long that she had taken the family name. As a child he went to her for sweets and all sorts of special favors which she was only too glad to furnish. The boy was the oldest and for a long time the only child in the family. Occasionally the cook sided against the boy and agreed that the father's discipline was right, and after a long talk and some "sweet blandishments" he became reconciled (outwardly) to the father's punishments. Further, it was shown that the boy practically took money or other property solely from the male sex. In one instance he stole a half dollar from the cook. When taxed with this apparent ingratitude the boy hastily added: "But I knew father would have to pay her back and a little more for all her kindness and pains in bringing me up. You see, I sort of looked on the cook as my mother in spite of her being colored."

As he grew up his rebellion against authority was shown to be really against the father. He said, "Some of the people who had authority over me at various times looked like father, especially the school master and Mr. X.; both treated me very nice and acted just like a father to me, and I took the most from them. After I took the money from Mr. X. I felt as though he had done something against me, instead of the reverse, and I

never wanted to go with him after that." From the age when he first began to steal and lie, he used to say he didn't want to be like the father, did not want to follow his profession, nor even engage in indoor work as the father did. He then began to plan to go away to lead a "wild, care-free life, away from all restraint." The man from whom he last took money was one whose son was also under strict authority—a fact which may be taken for what it is worth.

The possibility of there being a latent father antagonism was entirely overlooked at first, inasmuch as the father and son are at present the best of friends and "pals." They shoot and swim and go off on vacations together. Even the day after mental analysis had been fairly gone into, our patient showed me a letter to his father pleading for him to give him the right to go West at once, and ended with a playful threat that there were many ways to get money and a chance to go if the father should refuse.

Results of Treatment.—Associated with and following the foregoing analysis on the stealing and lying impulses, the youth was given ethical talks covering every phase of his previous misconducts and their consequences. Gradually an entire change in attitude and character took place. Now, several months after the analytic and training treatment, he has paid up all his old debts and has reimbursed his father for extra outlays in his behalf. He has voluntarily given up a desire to go West, has taken on a tutor and is working hard to enter a technical school from which his father was graduated, and is no longer unconcerned or careless in his daily conduct at home.

Comment.—In brief, then, we have here a boy who at the early age of 5 rather abruptly came into conflict with paternal discipline although the latter seemed to be not unnaturally or too severely administered. In sequence to this rebellion which was both suppressed and repressed, he developed a keen antagonism to the father and soon after began to lie and steal and assume other unethical traits of character. The habit of stealing continued until advanced adolescence, until corrective measures of training, away from the home environment, plus mental analysis were applied. The latter covered many interviews over a period of three months. At first, the boy met the analysis by an affectless indifference, but so soon as the real difficulty of defective adaptation to the father's authority as a child was made manifest and its later conscious contrast of seeming rapport with the father, the emotional reaction was intense. The analysis was never truly psycho-analytic but rather that of an intensive review of the foreconscious.

The investigation was, however, much more thorough and dynamic than that ordinarily given to such conduct disorders. Here, as in other instances, one is often impressed that the defective primary instinct acts as a sort of latent psychic infection which in time, as new adaptations in development are encountered, undergoes many transformations both in degree and kind. For example, the boy began with disobedience, then lying when hard pressed; next, he stole to get square with the father. Later, we find the school authority seemed to induce inattention to study and corresponding increase of desire to keep up and enlarge the chances for sport and play. The latter in turn necessitated more lying and deceit. Finally the previous defective adaptations engendered truancy and insubordination which passed over to vagabondage. Thus we see the mental conflict to correct the character faults was almost over. The don't care and affectless attitude of the incorrigible delinquent and final crystallization of the antisocial recidivist was about to be adopted when the correction was undertaken.

Ancestral History.—A word might be said regarding this boy's antecedents. The maternal grandfather left his family and led an antisocial life. The mother seemed inapt in handling children and rather slow in delicate appreciation of her duties and obligations in rearing them. Least of all did she understand wayward and headstrong boys. Her general attitude toward the inculcation of nursery ethics was poor and colorless. This son therefore easily found an early and warm attachment to his foster mother, the cook. The father left nothing wanting in his parental attitude toward the boy save an unusually lively temper and a quick and unsteady control over him, which seemed to make for the boy's ready belief that his father's talks were either bluffs of threatened punishment or that he was unjust in overawing the boy's attempts to set matters right in explanation. It may be of interest that the siblings of the boy himself were most normal physically and mentally and there was never the slightest moral difficulty with them. I may add at this point that there were no very serious sex delinquencies in this boy.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It may not be illogical to argue that from resistance to authority to theft, when found in the developing child, is not such a far cry when we look at the subject from the child, and not the adult, level. For instance, sufficient data are at hand for us to state that in the infant mind one of the earliest conceptions of reality is impingement of its desires by the parent. The magic signals of crying and gestures do not move the parent to gratify the child's wish. In the persistence of this feeling of unrequited longing, no doubt the child begins to scrutinize with continued wonder the reason for noncompliance on the part of the parent, and more or less rapidly interprets it in terms of selfishness or the self-satisfied possession of things and powers which enable that person to calmly resist all the child's frantic demands. Possibly it first sees that the very bigness of the parent lends strength. Soon, however, the personal belongings are also taken as symbols of the parent's potential self-sufficiency. One of the first acts of mimicry the growing child adopts is to deck himself out in the parent's wearing apparel. Thus equipped, it is the child's happiest concern to play the rôle of the parent, especially its authority vesture—tyrannical or beneficent whichever it may be. Balked by reality, the child's impulses are frequently gratified, perhaps secretly, in his play in the attic or barn. It is not a far step to the further exercising of power for the child's satisfaction in gratifying its personal appetite, in stealing fruits or committing forbidden excesses which he believes the parent has unrestrained opportunities to enjoy. If the child's lust for pleasure is sufficiently overmastering, this seizing of the parental power and privilege advances to new forms of covetousness and conquest, which may be that of possessing the magic symbol—money. It soon finds that money is really the easiest method of getting what it wants

rather than barter as in the manner of simple or primitive exchange. What is easier to imagine than that the unrestrained or poorly adjusted childish demand, perhaps repressed by the strict discipline of the parent, strives in some devious way to lay hold of the actual coveted possessions of the supposed favored one—the parent—who as he believes takes pleasure, or at least is indifferent, to the child's own ungratified longings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I may say that even when the child's defective adaptation to authority and property right are made clear, there are probably other and still more genetic reasons for this early conflict, namely, the latent infantile desire to usurp the place of the father or the mother in all its possible prerogatives. One need not neglect the study of the adult life of criminals, and especially the causes for recidivism, for even there the adult pattern of the anti-social acts will probably be found to embrace in greater part the distorted mechanism of the primary instincts of early life. I but wish to add my suggestions to those hopefully made by Healy and Glueck, that the intensive study of antisocial behavior of the juvenile delinquent and especially in earliest childhood may enable us to correct not a few such faults before a fixed formation of habits and character has rendered the offender so hopeless for reconstruction in adult life.